



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/019,528	02/25/2002	Raymond Anderson	550-293	2053
23117	7590	01/31/2006	EXAMINER	
NIXON & VANDERHYE, PC 901 NORTH GLEBE ROAD, 11TH FLOOR ARLINGTON, VA 22203			WU, RUTAO	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3639	

DATE MAILED: 01/31/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/019,528	ANDERSON ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	Rutao Wu	3639	

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**

**Period for Reply**

**A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.**

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
     Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
     Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### **Specification**

1. The disclosure is objected to because it contains an embedded hyperlink and/or other form of browser-executable code. Applicant is required to delete the embedded hyperlink and/or other form of browser-executable code. See MPEP § 608.01.
2. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: in Paragraph [0013] it states that "said apparatus comprising: length pricing code...". An apparatus is a machine or a system and cannot comprise programming code. A computer readable medium or software can comprise programming codes.

Appropriate correction is required.

3.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

4. Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Claim 15 states a duration pricing code, however, an explanation has not been provided in the specifications for a duration pricing code. Therefore, it does not allow one skilled in the arts to reconstruct the invention.

Art Unit: 3639

5. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

6. Claim 13 recites the limitation "apparatus" in line 3. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim 13 recites a "computer program product" in line 1, and then "said apparatus" in line 3, an apparatus is not a computer program product, appropriate action is required.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

7. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

8. As per Claims 1-15, these claims recite a series of steps and are considered for the purpose of analysis under 35 U.S.C. 101 as reciting a series of steps. The claims do not recite a pre- or post-computer activity but merely perform a series of steps of performing an algorithm through a lookup table or a database, and is directed to non-statutory subject matter. A process is statutory if it requires physical acts to be performed outside of the computer independent of and following the steps performed by a programmed computer, where those acts involve the manipulation of tangible physical objects and result in the object having a different physical attribute or structure (*Diamond v. Diehr*, 450 U.S. at 187, 209 USPQ at 8). Further, the claims merely manipulate an abstract idea manipulating a lookup database or perform a purely

mathematical algorithm without limitation to any practical application. A process which merely manipulates an abstract idea or performs a purely mathematical algorithm is non-statutory despite the fact that it might have some inherent usefulness (*Sakar*, 558 F.2d at 1335, 200 USPQ at 139).

Furthermore, in determining whether the claimed subject matter is statutory under 35 U.S.C. 101, a practical application test should be conducted to determine whether a “useful, concrete and tangible result” is accomplished. See *AT&T Corp. v. Excel Communications, Inc.*, 172 F.3d 1352, 1359-60, 50 USPQ2d 1447, 1452-53 (Fed. Cir. 1999); *State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group, Inc.*, 149 F.3d 1368, 1373, 47 USPQ2d 1596, 1600 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

An invention, which is eligible or patenting under 35 U.S.C. 101, is in the “useful arts” when it is a machine, manufacture, process or composition of matter, which produces a concrete, tangible, and useful result. The fundamental test for patent eligibility is thus to determine whether the claimed invention produces a “use, concrete and tangible result”. The test for practical application as applied by the examiner involves the determination of the following factors”

(a) “Useful” – The Supreme Court in *Diamond v. Diehr* requires that the examiner look at the claimed invention as a whole and compare any asserted utility with the claimed invention to determine whether the asserted utility is accomplished.

Applying utility case law the examiner will note that:

i. the utility need not be expressly recited in the claims, rather it may be inferred.

ii. if the utility is not asserted in the written description, then it must be well established.

(b) "Tangible" – Applying *In re Warmerdam*, 33 F.3d 1354, 31 USPQ2d 1754 (Fed. Cir. 1994), the examiner will determine whether there is simply a mathematical construct claimed, such as a disembodied data structure and method of making it. If so, the claim involves no more than a manipulation of an abstract idea and therefore, is nonstatutory under 35 U.S.C. 101. In *Warmerdam* the abstract idea of a data structure became capable of producing a useful result when it was fixed in a tangible medium, which enabled its functionality to be realized.

(c) "Concrete" – Another consideration is whether the invention produces a "concrete" result. Usually, this question arises when a result cannot be assured. An appropriate rejection under 35 U.S.C. 101 should be accompanied by a lack of enablement rejection, because the invention cannot operate as intended without undue experimentation.

The claims, as currently recited, appear to be directed to nothing more than a series of steps of manipulating a lookup database or perform a purely mathematical algorithm without any useful, concrete and tangible result and are therefore deemed to be non-statutory. While the prices may be concrete and/or tangible, there does not appear to be any useful result.

***Conclusion***

9. Examiner's Note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims below for the convenience of the applicant.

Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested that the applicant, in preparing the responses, fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the examiner.

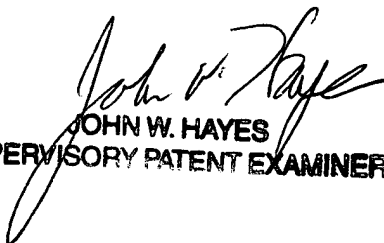
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Rutao Wu whose telephone number is (571)272-3136. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on (571)272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3639

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

rw

  
JOHN W. HAYES  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER